United Nations, has issued a Notice to suppliers under the 'Oil for Food' programme that companies holding contracts for only those goods which appear under a list of possible priority contracts, covering sectors such as Food, Health, Water Sanitation, Education, Agriculture and Electricity supplies, would be contacted by the concerned UN agencies. As per information available, so far 23 contracts given to Indian companies have been placed on the list of possible priority contracts. This list includes goods such as wheat, full cream powder, educational materials, medicines etc. Shipments of goods to other Arabian countries have been mainly affected due to dislocation of shipping, increase in freight, insurance charge etc.

(c) to (e) An additional list of 22 Indian companies representing approved contracts already shipped under the Oil for Food programme to Iraq, was sent by the Permanent Mission of India, New York, to the Office of the Iraq Programme for approval to be included in the list of possible priority contracts. These include goods such as wheat, sugar, etc. In addition, the Government is closely monitoring the situation by interaction with the apex industrial organisations as well as the Office of the Iraq Programme for further developments in this regard.

**DRI investigation in the marine export sector**

3099. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the marine export sector required DRI investigation and declaration under DEPB Scheme;

(b) whether the sector faces any threat due to the unscientific method of DRI investigation and whether Government have received any complaint relating to the harassment met out on investigation;

(c) whether Government are of the view that the method of investigation requires review as the DEPB Scheme is not actual user specified unlike the advance licence scheme;

(d) the reasons for Government propose to insisting on declaration under DEPB Scheme to the marine sector when the other export sectors are exempted;and

(e) whether Government propose to look into the unfairness, if any, in the present scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY) : (a) to (e) As per information furnished by Ministry of Finance and Company Affairs, Department of Revenue, the Directorate General of Revenue Intelligence had started investigations against export offish and fish products in Jan., 2002 on

the basis of intelligence reports that such exporters were availing of DEPB benefits without actually using any preservatives or chemicals in the manufacture of export products. As far as the DEPB scheme is concerned, the requirement of a declaration to be made about the use of chemicals and preservatives in the export of marine products stands deleted w.e.f. 1st April, 2002. The representations received from exporters of marine products on this issue have been forwarded to Department of Revenue for their consideration.

**Visit of French Trade Delegation to Delhi**

3100. SHRI LALIT SURI:

SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIG1REDDY : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that a French Trade Delegation headed by the French Prime Minister recently visited Delhi and held talks with Indian authorities to widen the scope of trade between the two countries;

(b) if so, the details of the talks held and the outcome thereof, indicating the new items of import and export added;

(c) the details of problems that are confronted or stand as hurdles between India and France; and

(d) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to boost the trade between the two countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY) : (a) The Ministers for Economy, Finance and Industry and Trade and Commerce of the Republic of France accompanying the French Prime Minister on his recent visit to Delhi had a meeting with the Minister of Commerce and Industry on 7th February, 2003.

(b) and (c) The two sides exchanged views on market access issues for each others products (marine products and textile products from India and wines and spirits from France), interest of the French side in infrastructure projects, and cooperation in the WTO.

(d) The steps taken to promote bilateral trade and economic cooperation include regular interaction at the Government level through the medium of the Indo-French Joint Committee, Joint Working Groups in the sectors of mineral exploration and development, energy and information technology, organisation of 'Destination India' (investment promotion meets), facilitating direct business level contracts, participation in trade promotion events, etc.